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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KVPR](#) [UNMIK](#) [UN](#) [YI](#) [EU](#) [UY](#)
SUBJECT: URUGUAY ON U.S. DECISION TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO'S
INDEPENDENCE

REF: A. A. STATE 16319
[1](#)B. B. MONTEVIDEO 0076
[1](#)C. C. MONTEVIDEO 0068
[1](#)D. D. MONTEVIDEO 0016

Classified By: Ambassador Frank E. Baxter
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On February 19, the Ambassador delivered ref A demarche to Deputy Foreign Minister Maria "Belela" Herrera, Director General for Political Affairs Alvaro Gallardo and Political Advisor Federico Gomensoro. (Note: Embassy consciously chose not to meet with the anti-American Foreign Minister Reinaldo Gargano who will be replaced on March 1 - reftel C. End Note.) After stressing the need for the GOU to move quickly to recognize Kosovo's independence, the Ambassador underscored Uruguay's long-standing support for human rights. He reminded his interlocutors that the history of ethnic cleansing and crimes against civilians were important factors in the decision to recognize Kosovo's independence and support for UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's plan for international supervision.

[1](#)2. (C) After listening attentively to the various points in the demarche, Hererra said that the GOU well understood the rationale behind President Bush's February 18 decision to recognize Kosovo as an independent country. However, she also stated that Uruguay "was not urged" to take any decision for or against Kosovo's independence "at this time", on direct instructions from the Foreign Minister. Herrera and Gallardo also cited various reasons why Uruguay would remain "neutral" for the time being, including: (a) that Kosovo is a "hot issue" at the moment, (b) that the MFA is being lobbied by other (unspecified) ambassadors on both sides of the issue, (c) that there are no Serbs or Kosovars here in Uruguay to press their respective cases and (d) because Uruguay does not yet know the positions of other MERCOSUR and GRULAC countries. Gallardo added that it would have been vastly easier to sign on to something that had been agreed upon by both Belgrade and Pristina.

COMMENT

[1](#)3. (C) After the meeting was over, Deputy Foreign Minister Herrera personally escorted the Ambassador to the elevator where she privately described to him "how horrible" it had been to work for Gargano and that she had only agreed to remain in her job out of a sense of duty. Herrera said that it was possible that the GOU's "wait and see" attitude on

Kosovo could change once Gonzalo Fernandez took over as the new Foreign Minister on March 1. End Comment.
Baxter